



Easy Rider

Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services Transit Newsletter



December 2003

Inclement Weather Plan

Loudoun County Transit released its new Inclement Weather Plan for the upcoming winter season. This new plan includes a delayed/compressed morning departure schedule, a limited morning departure schedule and an early dismissal afternoon schedule.

The delayed/compressed schedule was designed to start buses later than the normal 5:00 AM start time such as a one-hour or two-hour delay as well as compressing buses to leave on 10 to 15 minute increments. This will allow for passengers to not have to crowd onto the first bus because buses will be arriving at the lots every 10 or so minutes.

The limited service option will be used when the road conditions are not ideal for full service, but not so bad to cancel service. The limited service has two formats: service all the way into DC or just to West Falls Church Metro Station from the Purcellville, Hamilton, Leesburg and Dulles North. This allows passengers to choose if they want to pay full fare and go all the way into the



District and risk congestion or pay \$1 and go to West Falls Church Metro. There will also be morning service from Cascades/Lowes Island to West Falls Church and from West Falls Church to AOL/MCI/Dulles North.

The afternoon early dismissal plan has some buses leaving the District and stopping at all stops and some buses will start at the Pentagon Transit Center and go to Rosslyn then to Loudoun County. Passengers will have the choice

to metro to the Pentagon or Rosslyn or be picked up at their normal location.

This Inclement Weather Plan is on the County's website at <http://www.loudoun.gov/transportation/mass.htm> then go to Loudoun County Commuter Bus Schedules line and click on it. Busmeisters will also have copies.

New Lost and Found Procedures

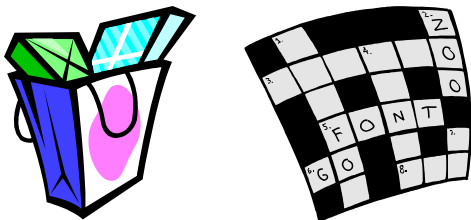
Passengers who leave items on the Loudoun County Transit (LC Transit) commuter buses will now be responsible for picking up their items that have been found on the buses at either the County Government Center at 1 Harrison Street in Leesburg or at the Yellow Motor Coach office VRTA at 109 N. Bailey Drive in Purcellville. Small items will be mailed to passengers who provide the County with a mailing address. Yellow Motor Coach and County staff can no longer spend hours each week trying to shuffle the items between buses so that passengers can retrieve them from a different bus in the afternoon or next morning. The County Government Center is open late every week-night and the item can be left with the guards or a box may be labeled in the Bluemont Room on the first floor that says Loudoun County Transit Passengers where found items can be placed for pickup.



Just to let you know what we have been looking for over the last month includes: four cell phones, three PDAs, five hats, two umbrellas, a watch, a pillow, a book, an earring, glasses, bifocals and a lunch box. So please try to remember to check your seat and overhead compartment when leaving the bus in the morning and afternoon.

Communities in Motion Day

On October 16th, County staff was at all the park and ride lots in the County distributing Transportation Goodie Bags to all the morning riders. Communities in Motion was developed by the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) to celebrate public transportation and to showcase how public transit benefits communities. APTA estimates that over 14 million Americans ride on public transportation each weekday and the U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that another 25 million use public transportation less frequently but on a regular basis.



The goodie bags included a transit fact sheet, local and regional transit information, a LC Transit crossword puzzle, trinkets and vendor vouchers and coupons. The following riders correctly completed the crossword puzzle and their name was then drawn from a hat and received a prize from OTS staff for their efforts: Bob Albert, Robin Haley Fischer, Walter Halfmann, Shelley Huss, Anastasia Jafari, Alisa Kluthe, Marina Murray, Ken Rowland, Myrna Turturro, and Darlene Watford. Thanks to all the riders who took the challenge to complete the puzzle and provided good feedback on the day's event.

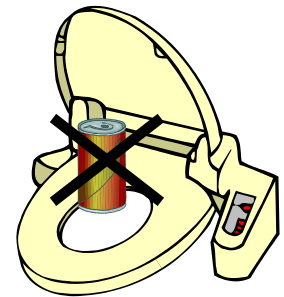
Starting December 1st A Free Ride!

Beginning Monday, December 1, 2003, the M1 afternoon bus scheduled to depart West Falls Church at 6:15 PM will be free through the end of January 2004. This bus takes passengers to Dulles North, Leesburg, Hamilton and Purcellville. As

with all our buses that pick up at West Falls Church, passengers can pick up this bus at Bus Shelter A on the north side bus bays at West Falls Church Metro. So if your schedule/commute allows, take advantage of this free ride - you would have your choice of seats!

Bathroom Etiquette

There have been some disturbing instances lately involving the use of the restrooms on the commuter buses. Passengers have been placing items down into the toilet such as soda cans and paper towels that have created some serious damage to the flushing system on the toilets. Only the toilet tissue provided in the restroom may be flushed. The last soda can incident actually broke the holding tank. Staff would like to take this moment to ask that passengers please refrain from putting non-flushable items down the toilets. These instances cost the company money plus take a bus out of service. If these instances continue, there is the possibility that the restrooms will be taken out of service on the commuter runs.



You guys are adults, act like adults - put your paper towels and soda cans in the trash can - not the toilet.

Bus Biz-A reminder

Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services has created an email system to send service related messages to bus passengers - it is called Bus Biz. If you are not already signed up for this service, please send us an email at rideshare@loudoun.gov and we will add your name to the message receipt list.

Rules Over The Road

1. County staff has received numerous comments lately about **cell phones** on the buses. We ask that you be mindful of your surroundings while using your cell phone on the bus. If possible talk softly, keep the call to a minimum and put the ring on vibrate so as not to disturb your neighbor.
2. The driver of the bus needs to concentrate while driving the bus, so staff asks that you please **not talk to the driver**. Talking to the driver may distract his/her attention from matters on the road and could lead to a serious incident involving you and your fellow passengers on the bus.
3. Once the bus driver has **closed the door** at any pick up location in the morning or afternoon, the door will not be opened for late arriving passengers. This rule of the road has been in existence for some time now and just needs to be sent as a reminder to long-time riders and new passengers too.
4. **Bicycles** are allowed to be placed in the luggage compartment on the Yellow Transportation commuter coaches at the following locations: any park and ride lot the bus stops at in the County and in the afternoon at I & 15th, the Pentagon and Rosslyn.



Metrocheks

This is just a reminder to all riders that the County will not accept metrocheks that have been used anywhere in the Metro system. If they have been used you will notice on the metrochek dollar values in black ink on the left side of the metrochek. Please do not try to give your busmeister or bus driver a used metrochek. The County cannot receive reimbursement from WMATA for these used metrocheks.

New Buses Are Coming!!

On November 20, 2003, the first of our new 22-bus fleet, the Pilot Bus, being built by Motor Coach Industries (MCI) hit the assembly line. This particular Pilot Bus is scheduled to be delivered in early February 2004. Look for continual updates regarding the progress of these 22 buses.

The picture in this story is a sample of what the buses will look like - only in black and white. The buses will have the colorized LC Transit logo on the side, front and back of the buses. As a side note the request for proposal for operation and/or maintenance of the commuter bus service program hit the streets on October 31, 2003. Proposals are due to the County on December 19, 2003 with awarding of the new contract by the Board of Supervisors sometime in early March with a contract start date of July 1, 2004.



Loudoun'Clear

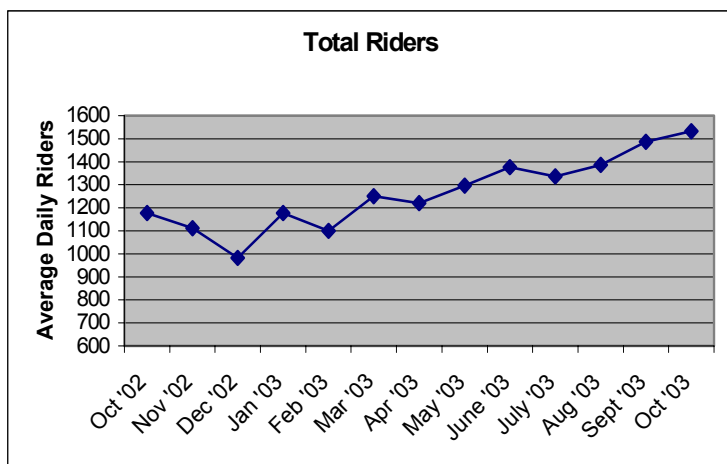
One of our goals is to provide our riders with updated transit information. The newest way we are trying to accomplish this is by sending text messaging via our Loudoun'Clear System. This system was created by Yellow Transportation. They will notify riders of important information regarding the LC Transit Commuter Bus service as well as delays caused by weather, traffic, road closures, etc., which would affect your travel plans. To start receiving these text messages go to the web at www.loudoun.gov/transportation and complete the form. There are currently 360 text message phone numbers in the database.

My How We Are Growing

In 1993 when the County took over the financially ailing Sterling Commuter Bus operations, there were three buses making three trips into and out of Washington, DC. Today there is a 17-bus fleet that operates three different routes for a total of 26 AM trips and 28 PM trips. In fiscal year 1994 (July 93-June 94) the system recorded 44,873 passenger trips and in fiscal year 2003 that increased to 284,614 passenger trips. Based on information submitted this month to the National Transit Database for the FY03 reporting year, Loudoun County Transit recorded 11,077,920 passenger miles.

As you can see from the Total Riders chart below the system has grown 23% from one year ago, adding almost 350 riders to the system. Average daily passenger numbers reached an all time high of over 1,500 riders for the month of October.

The long-haul service (Loudoun to DC) has grown in the last year from 1,038 daily passenger trips to 1197 passenger trips or 159 (13%) more daily passenger trips. The Cascades/Lowes Island Service to West Falls Church has grown 75 (41%) passenger trips per day from 105 to 180. The Reverse Commute has grown the most with an increase of 78% daily passenger ridership - from 34 daily passenger trips to 156 daily passenger trips.



Dulles 2 Dulles Connector

A new bus service that started mid-September now gives commuter bus riders an alternative to depart the city during the midday. The Dulles 2 Dulles Connector runs every hour from the Dulles Town Center to Dulles Airport. This bus is timed to meet the connection with the Metrobus 5A that departs from L'Enfant Plaza at half-past every hour and at Rosslyn at approximately 45 past every hour and arrives at the airport at half-past the hour. The cost of the Metrobus 5A is \$2.50 and the Dulles 2 Dulles is fifty-cents. The Dulles 2 Dulles Connector stops at the Dulles North Transit Center to drop off and pick up passengers. Passengers can also make a connection at the Dulles Town Center to the 7 to 7 on 7 to come to Leesburg and eventually to Hamilton and Purcellville with the Purcellville Connector. If you would like schedules they are on the web or staff can mail them to you.



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Feature Story

We all like to hear or read a good story. Now it's you - the rider's turn - to send in to us a commuting story. This feature will be in future newsletters. Each time we are publishing a newsletter we will ask the riders to submit a commuting story based on a certain topic - sort of like Funniest Home Video when they ask Americans to send in a video dancing like Elvis. **This month we want to receive commuting stories involving funny moments relative to any holiday.** If you have experienced something silly or funny while commuting during a holiday send it to us at rideshare@loudoun.gov. Please no incriminating names, numbers, etc. and keep it clean. The winning story will be published in the next newsletter and the author will receive a nice gift.

This Transportation Newsletter is published by the Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services staff. Visit us on the web at www.loudoun.gov/transportation.